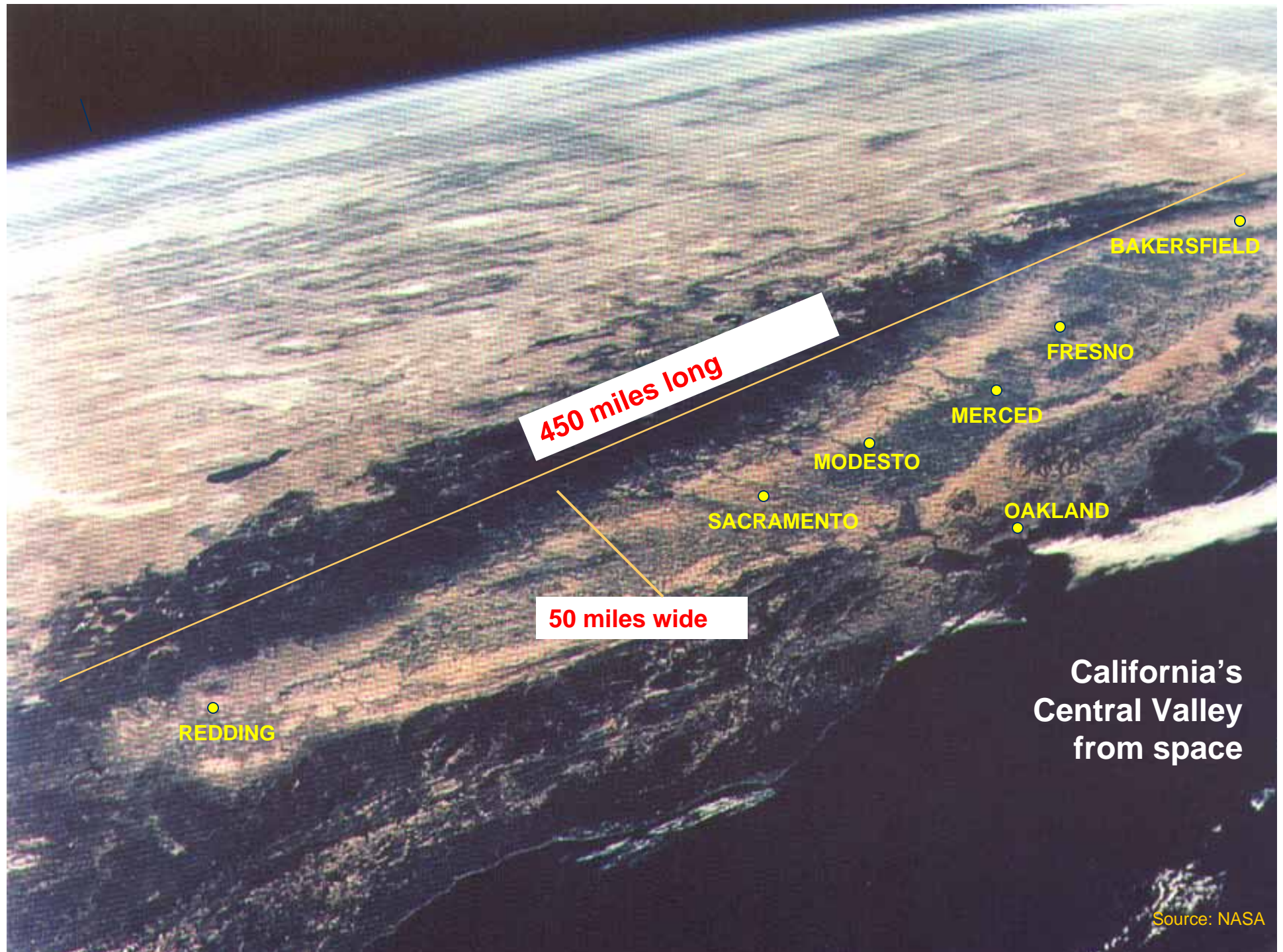




# Challenges and Choices for the Central Valley

Carol Whiteside  
The Great Valley Center  
201 Needham Street  
Modesto, California 95354  
[richard@greatvalley.org](mailto:richard@greatvalley.org)



**California's  
Central Valley  
from space**

Source: NASA

# The Great Valley Center supports organizations and activities working to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Great Central Valley



- Leadership Programs
- Neutral Media Source
- Information Clearinghouse



- GVC has granted \$5 million throughout the Valley since 1997
- Regional Intermediary





## The Geography

### The San Joaquin, Sacramento and Tulare Valleys

Circa 1902

*Note the presence of  
"Tulare Lake"*

*An intermittent lake  
once sourced by the  
Kings, Kaweah and  
Kern Rivers*

## The People of the Mid-1700s

More than 100,000 Native Americans speaking 30 different languages

The Yokuts were the San Joaquin Valley's largest tribe

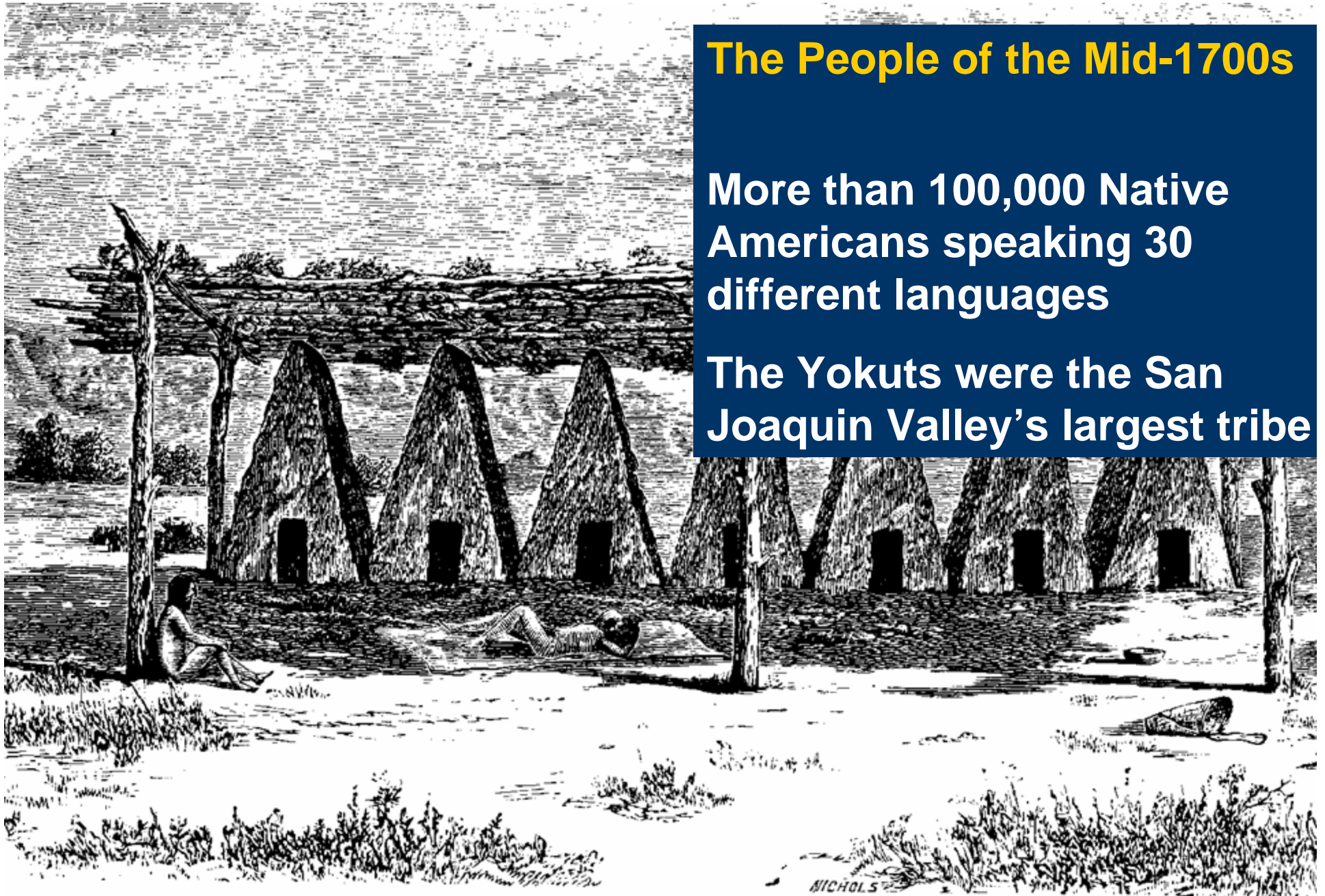
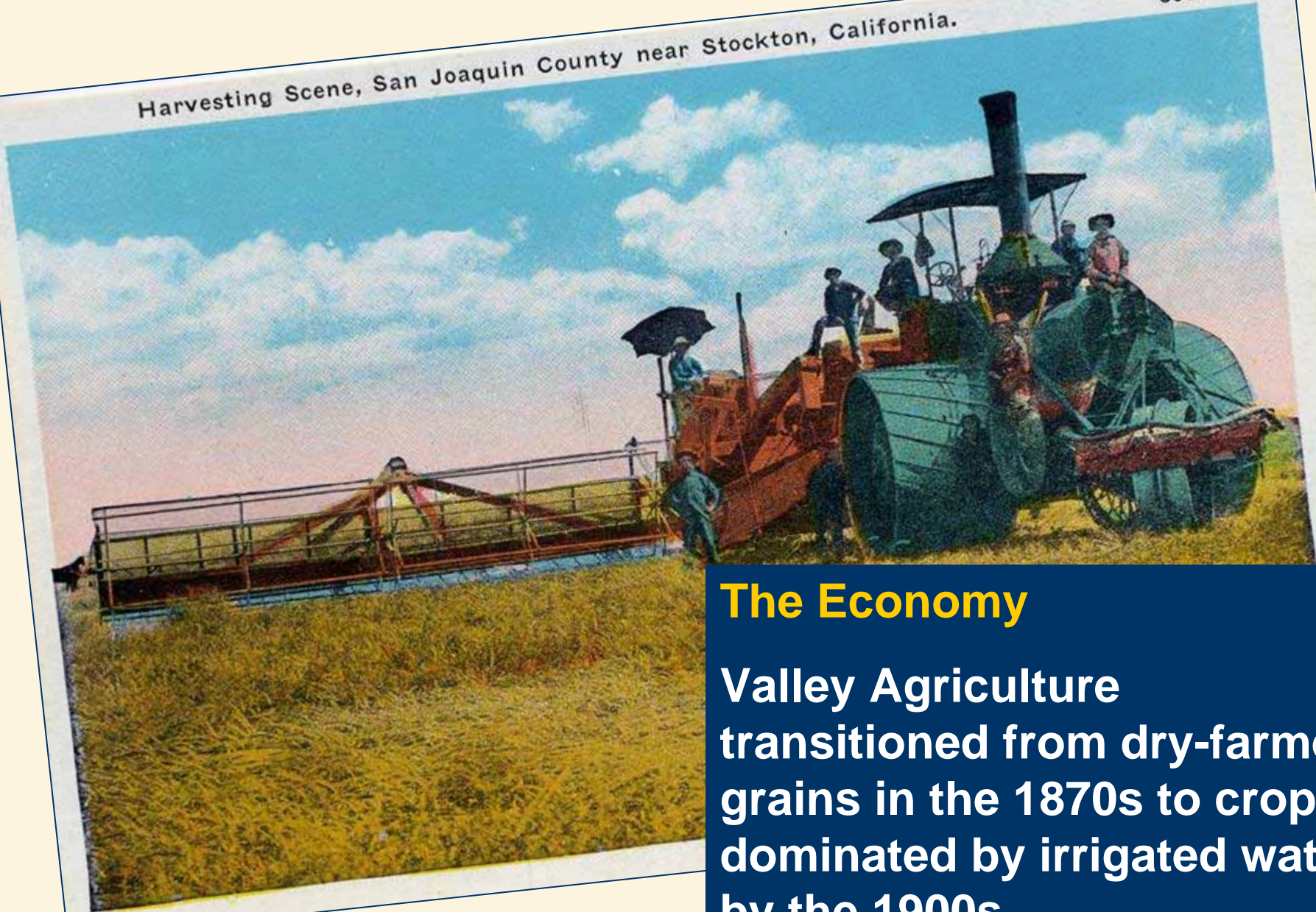


FIG. 4.—Yókuts Tule Lodges.



Harvesting Scene, San Joaquin County near Stockton, California.

5085



## The Economy

Valley Agriculture transitioned from dry-farmed grains in the 1870s to crops dominated by irrigated water by the 1900s

## Water

Depression-era State and Federal projects now serve a farming area the size of England and more than 30 million Californians







## **Resulting Economic Impact of Central Valley Agriculture Today**

- **Produces more than 300 crops**
- **57% of state's \$30 billion agricultural output**
- **Would rank first in agricultural production if it were a state**



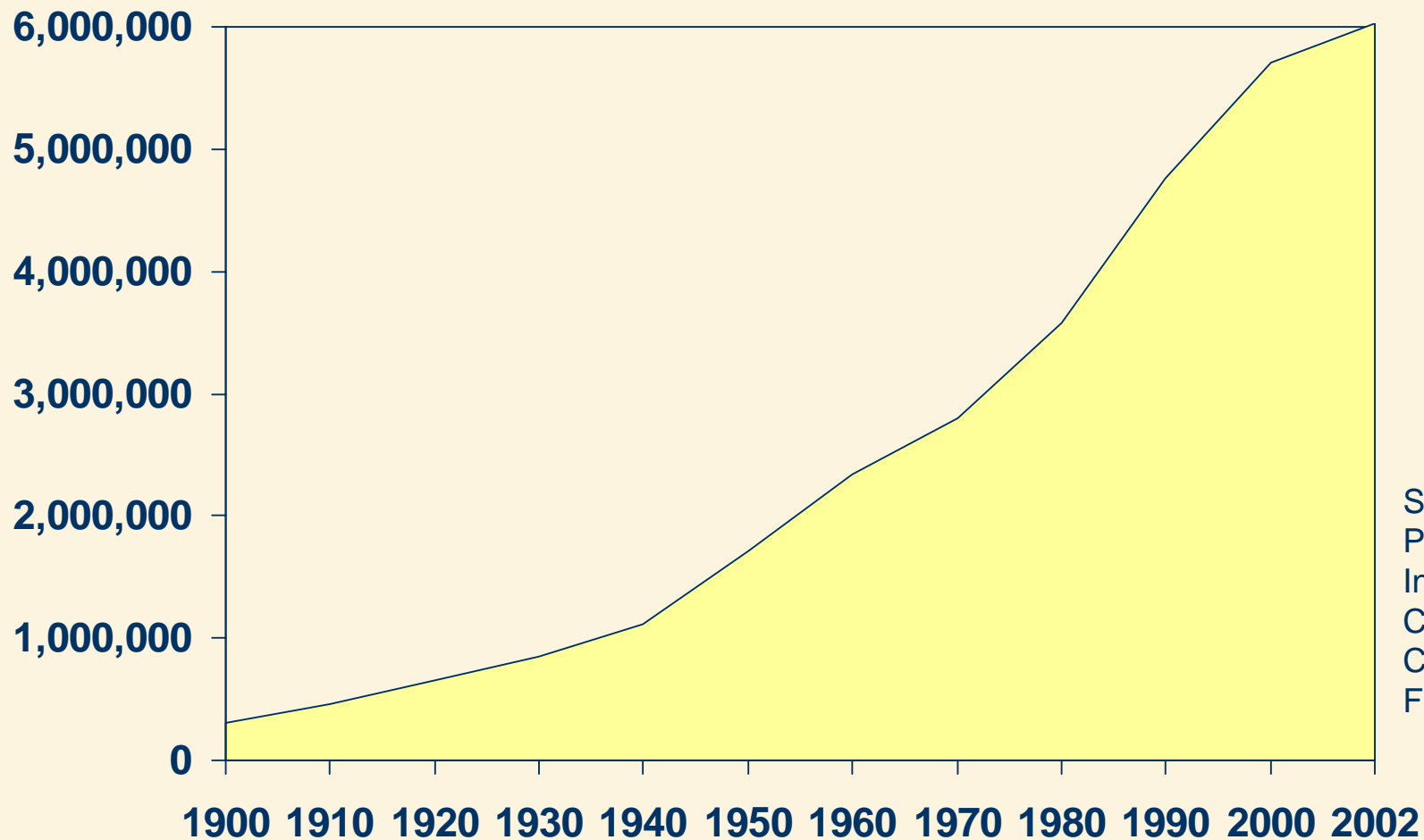
**Today, 20% of Central Valley jobs  
directly or indirectly depend  
on agriculture**

Source: Economic Development Dept., 2004



**The Central Valley's population has doubled  
every 30 years since 1900  
and now stands at 6.3 million**

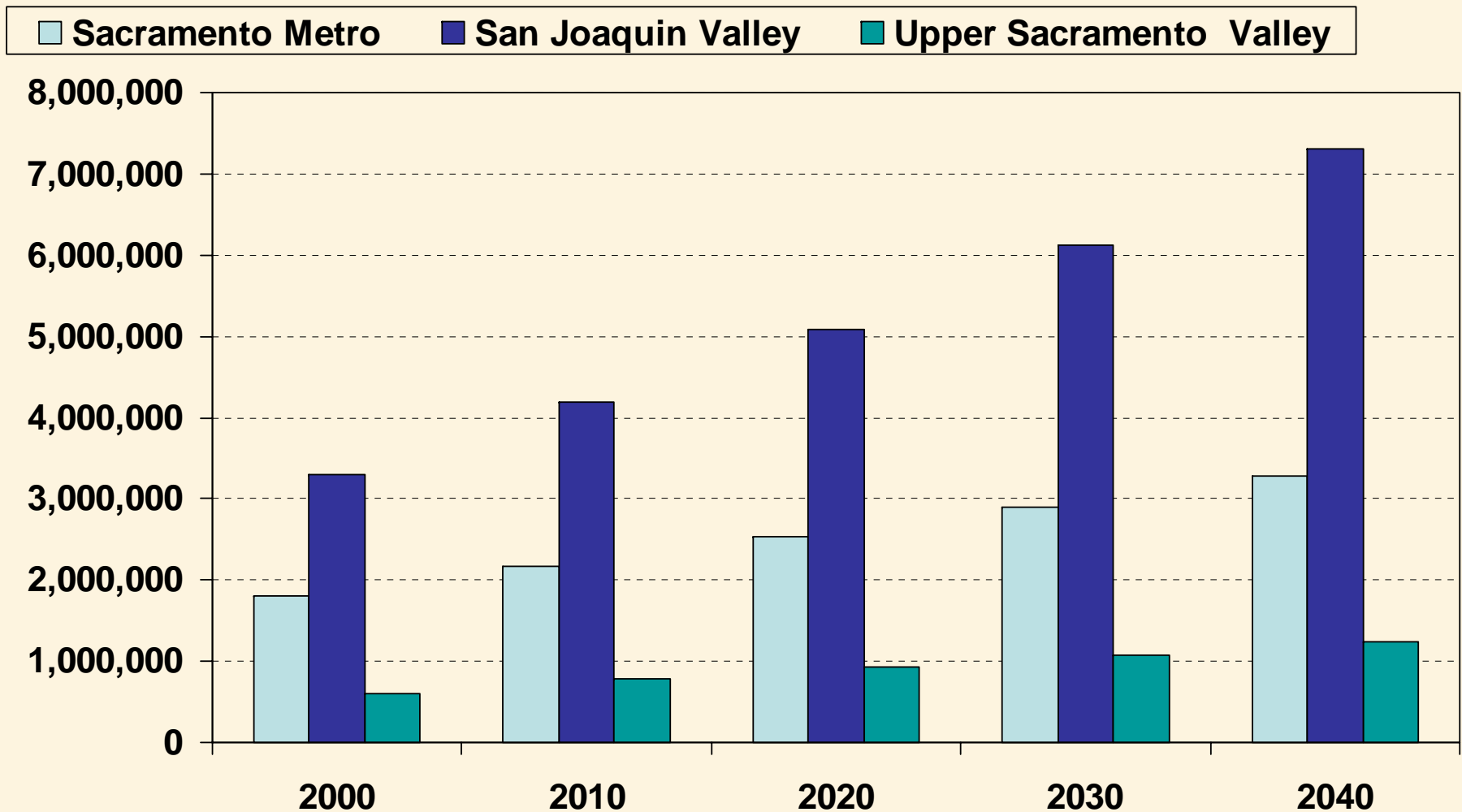
**Central Valley Population 1900-2002**



Source:  
Public Policy  
Institute of  
California;  
Calif. Dept. of  
Finance

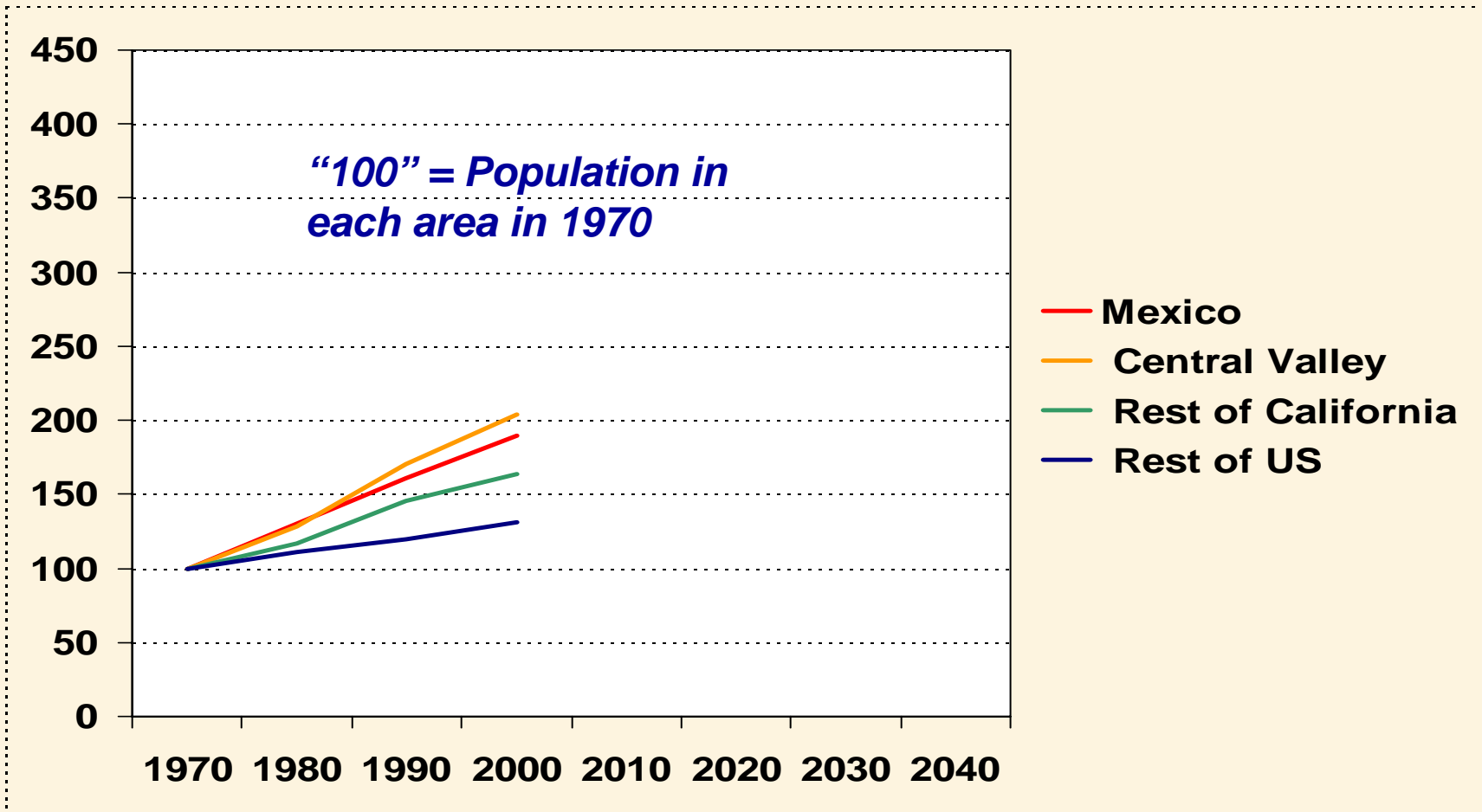


**Looking Ahead:**  
**More people than San Francisco Bay Area by 2020**  
**The equivalent of 10 new Fresnos by 2040**  
**San Joaquin Valley up 131% by 2050**



Source: Hans Johnson, Public Policy Institute of California; Calif. Dept. of Finance

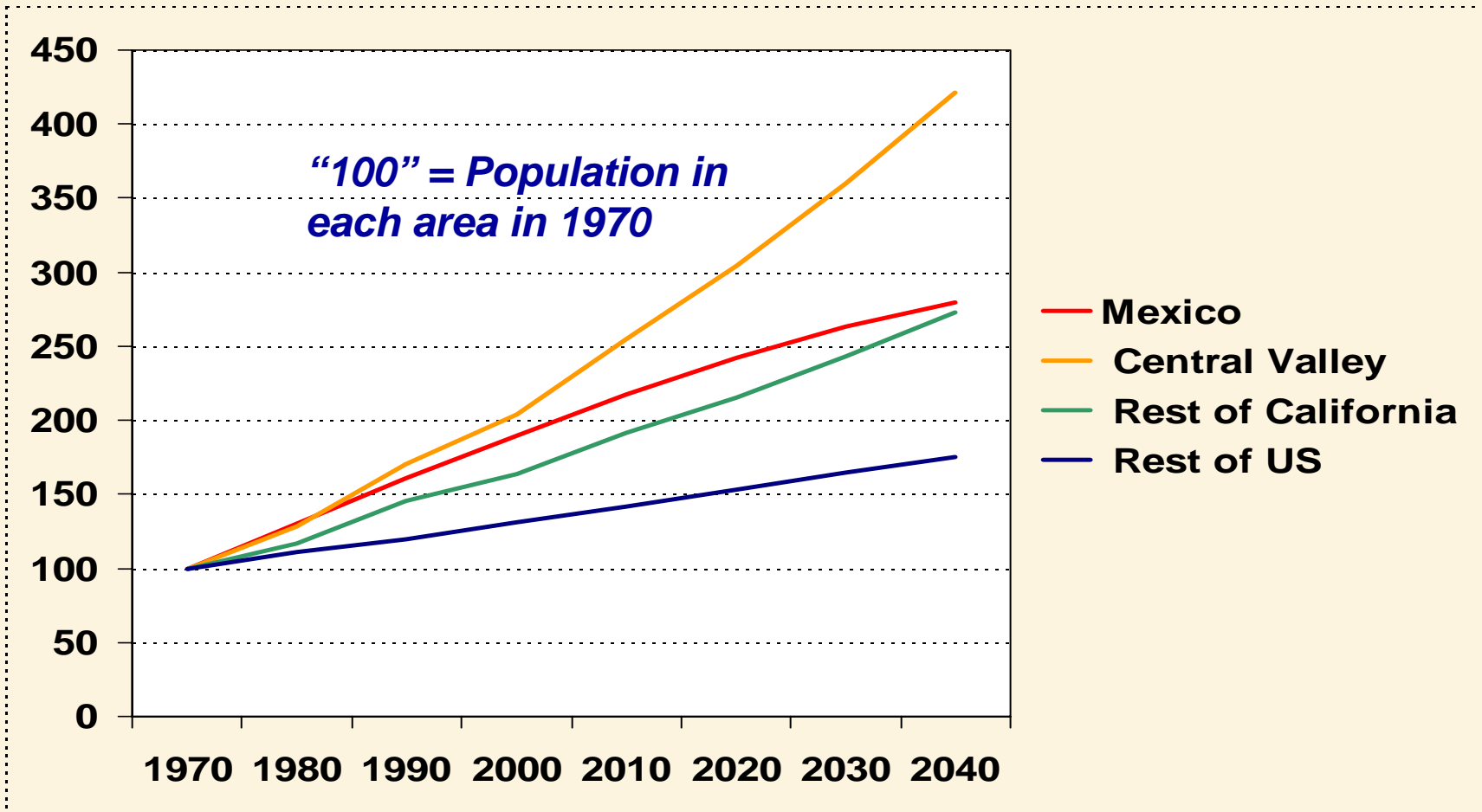
# Central Valley's Projected Growth Rates Outpace Mexico, California and U.S.



Source: CA Dept. of Finance; Hans Johnson, Public Policy Institute of California, [www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)



# Central Valley's Projected Growth Rates Outpace Mexico, California and U.S.



Source: CA Dept. of Finance; Hans Johnson, Public Policy Institute of California, [www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)



**What is causing  
population growth in the Valley?**

**Coastal housing costs are one reason**

**Median Single Family Home Sale Price in August 2005**

**SF Bay Area                      \$ 730,360**

**California                        \$ 568,890**

**San Joaquin Valley   \$ 363,720**

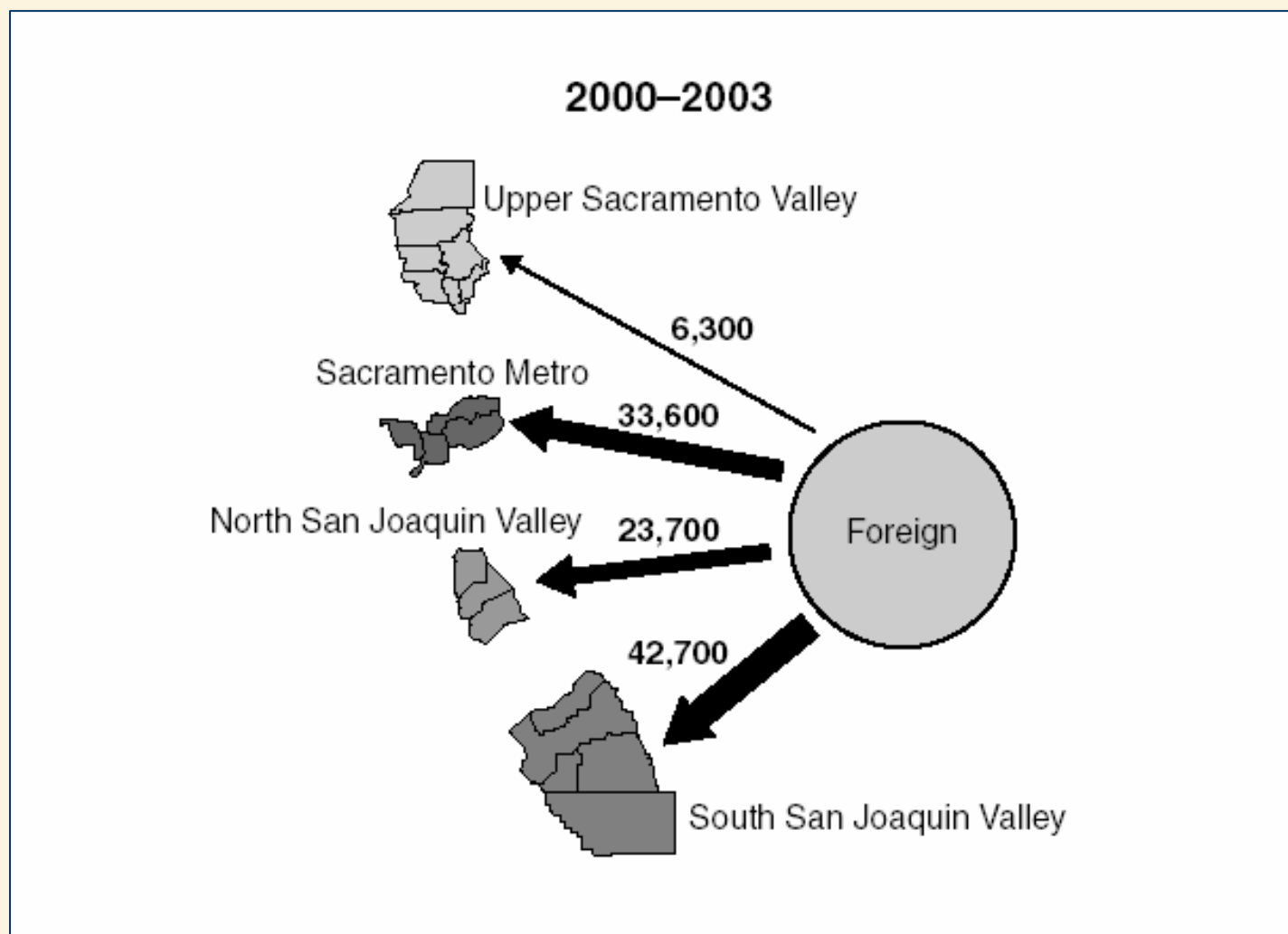
Source: California Association of Realtors



**What is  
causing  
population  
growth in the  
Valley?**

**Rapid  
Immigration  
is another  
reason**

## Foreign Migration by Subregion to the Central Valley is concentrated between Madera and Kern Counties



Source: Hans Johnson, Public Policy Institute of California; US Census Bureau

## What is causing population growth in the Valley?

- 65% of region's growth due to natural increase
- 35% due to Domestic and Foreign Migration

Source: Public Policy Institute of California, Hans Johnson, "Central Valley at the Crossroads" (Feb 2005)



## Impacts of Growth: Brewing Discussions of Land Use







**Altamont Pass at Interstate 580**

## **Impacts of Growth:**

**Vehicle Hours of Delay have increased since 1998**

**Up 52% in the North San Joaquin Valley**

**Up 577% (not a typo!) in the South San Joaquin Valley**

Source: Caltrans, 2004

# Familiar Environmental Challenges: The Valley has some of the nation's worst air



Smog obscuring Downtown Fresno and  
the Sierra Nevada in 2003

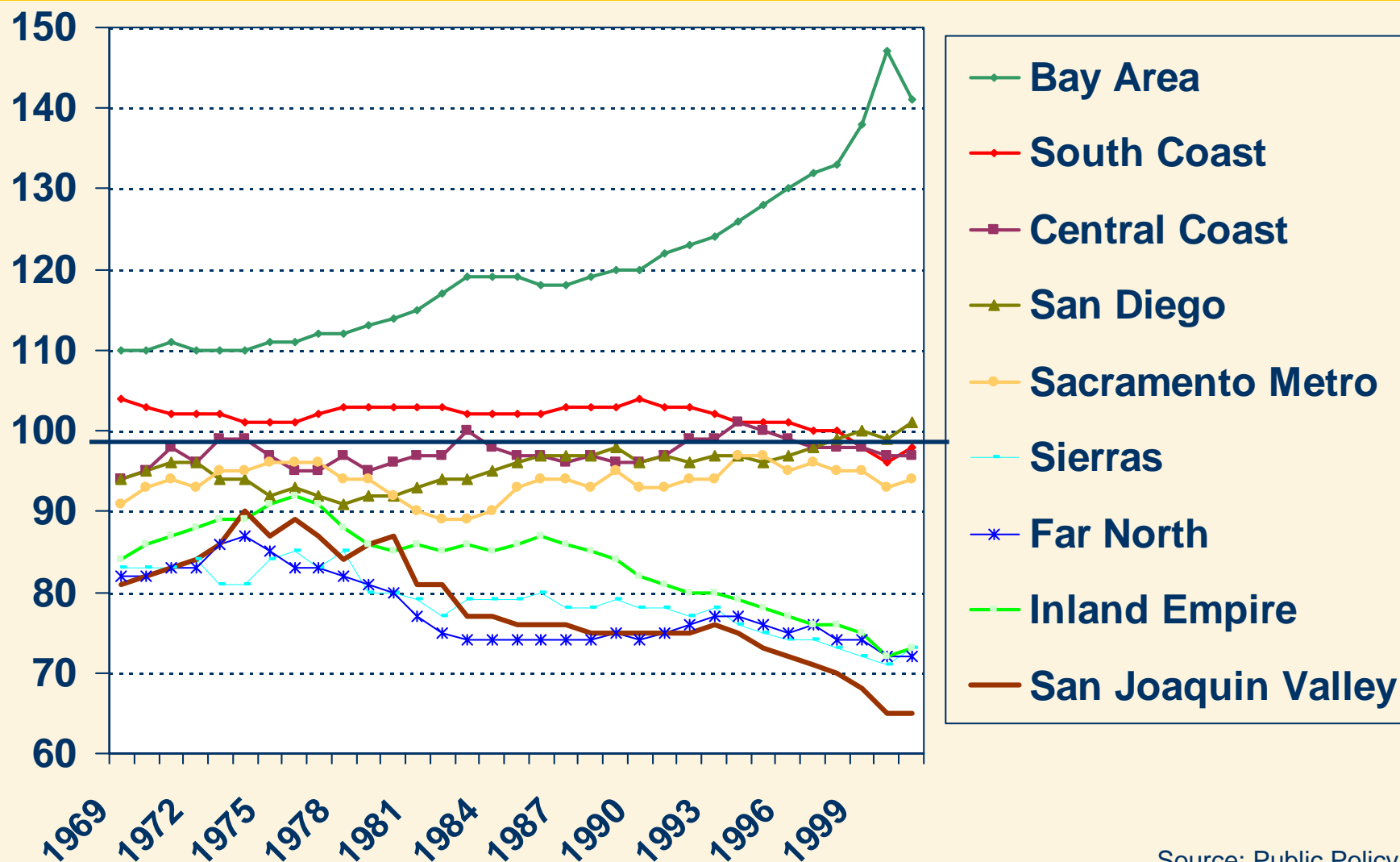
## Top 10 Most Ozone-polluted cities

1. Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, Calif.
2. **Fresno, Calif.**
3. **Bakersfield, Calif.**
4. **Visalia-Tulare-Porterville, Calif.**
5. Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, Texas
6. Sacramento-Yolo, Calif.
7. **Merced, Calif.**
8. Atlanta, Ga.
9. Knoxville, Tenn.
10. Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, N.C.-S.C.

Source: American Lung Association 2003  
State of the Air Report

# Yet Regional Per Capita Income Relative to State has dropped

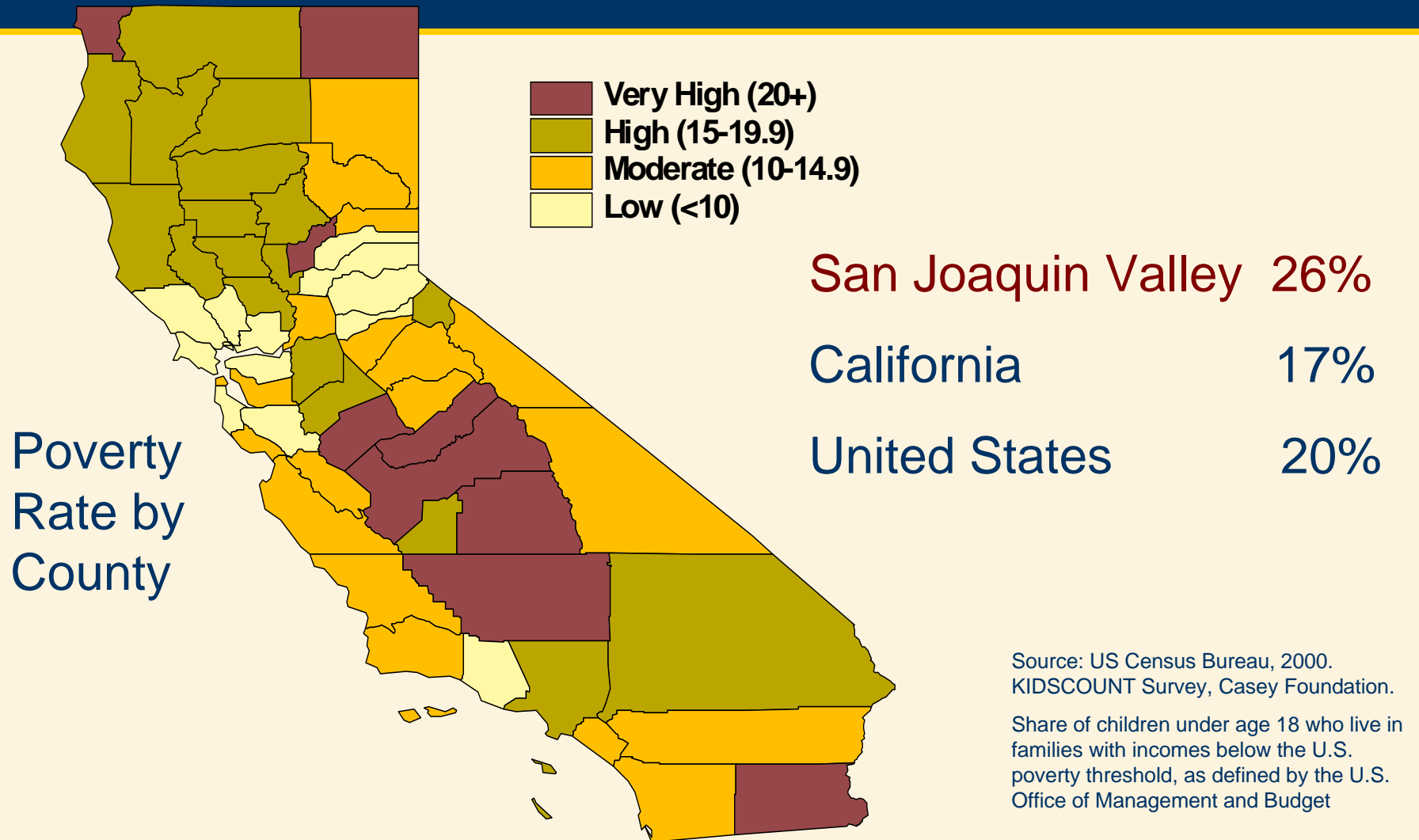
(100 = State Per Capita Income)



Source: Public Policy  
Institute of California



# San Joaquin Valley has highest percentage of kids under 18 living in poverty: 26%



**Economic Challenge:  
The Valley has the potential to be a liability to  
California and the nation  
due to its weak base**



**2003 Associated Press photo of  
conditions in Tulare County**

*“Those of us who  
live here have  
learned to drive on  
the right roads so  
we don’t have to  
look at this.”*

**Associated Press, June 6, 2004**

# Positive Indicators and Challenges

## Habitat Conservation Plans take time to develop

**San Joaquin County:** HCP process working since 1991

**Kern County:** 1994 Metro Bakersfield Multi-species HCP focuses on 405 sq-mile general plan area but larger Kern Valley HCP is ongoing

**Tulare County:** “Lack of Consensus” among farmers, developers and agencies disbanded HCP process in 1998 after 7 years of work

Aleutian Canada Geese  
on Pacific Flyway



Double crested cormorant  
in San Joaquin County



Kit Fox in Tulare County



### Sources:

National Center for  
Environmental  
Decision making  
Research; City of  
Bakersfield; San  
Joaquin Council of  
Governments.



# The Valley's Leadership



**In Sacramento...**

## State Senate

**2 Republicans**

**2 Democrats**

## State Assembly

**7 Republicans**

**3 Democrats**



**In Washington D.C. ...**

## House

**4 Republicans**

**2 Democrats**

## Senate

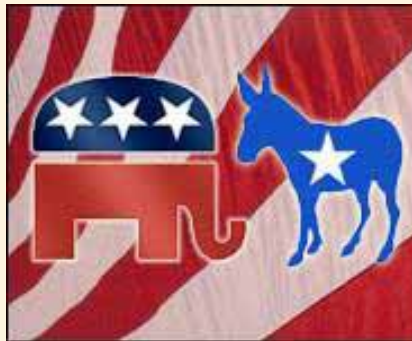
**2 Democrats**

# Three challenges for those working in the field of environmental issues in the San Joaquin Valley today

The focus of the region is on **Jobs and Economic Development**



Local Political arena less supportive of resource protection because **environment not seen as Republican 'issue'**

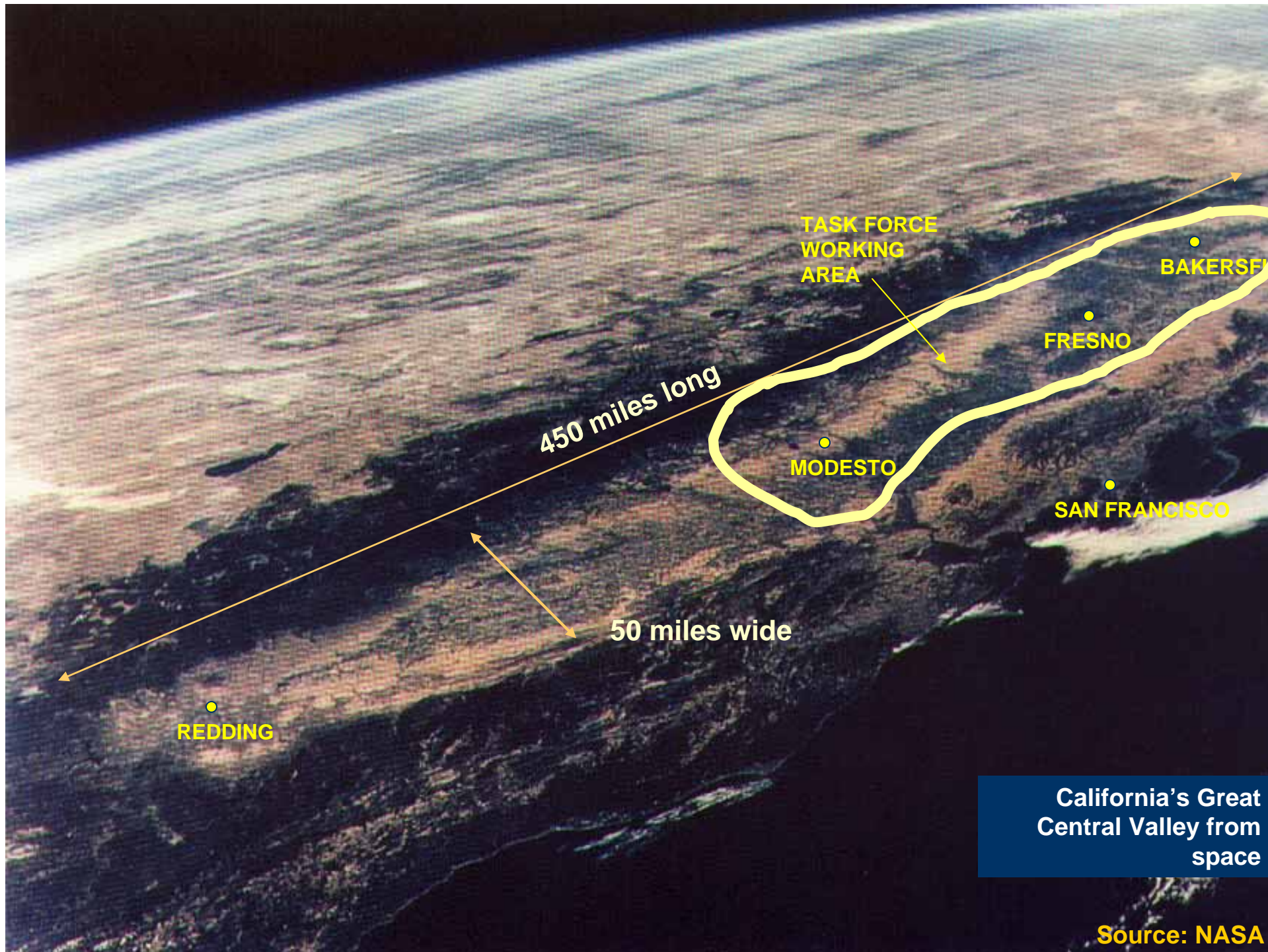


Public Concern with "Environment" limited to issues with immediate impact on people - such as **air and asthma and water quality and taste.**









California's Great  
Central Valley from  
space

Source: NASA

# We all share the responsibility

As the region grows, can we create the foundation and infrastructure that will create a healthy region that approaches parity with the rest of the state and nation, or

# We all share the responsibility

Will growth without resources  
perpetuate the poverty and disparity  
that exists in the region?

# 3 million new people in 30 years!

## Services Cost Billions

- New Schools and Education      \$\$
- Clean Water      \$\$
- Highways and Bridges      \$\$
- Air Quality      \$\$\$
- Waste Water Treatment      \$

## Cost Estimate

\$20 Billion?    \$30 Billion?    \$40 Billion?



# A region of limited capacity

- Immigrants with limited job skills
- Kids living in poverty
- Communities with chronically high unemployment
- Local governments with already strained budgets

***... can't provide the facilities and services that the exploding population will require.***

# When other regions grew, there was assistance

- Clean Water Grants
- Federal Interstate System
- Revenue-sharing to local governments
- Rural Electrification

# There is precedent for special involvement in extraordinary circumstances



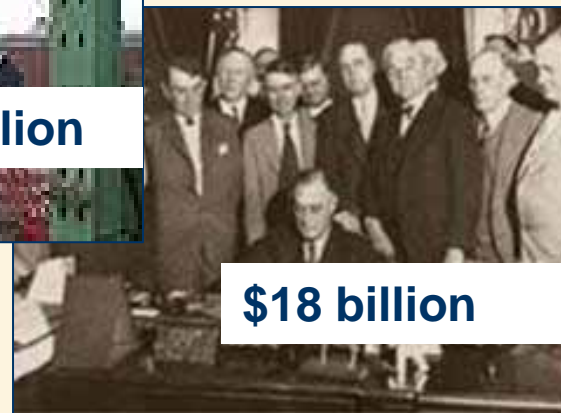
**\$2.3 billion**

Hurricane Hugo



**\$14.6 billion**

Boston's Big Dig



**\$18 billion**

FDR approving Tennessee Valley Authority

Sources: TVA, FEMA. TVA dollar amount adjusted for inflation, 2002



Will we find a  
way?


...or





**2003 Associated Press photo of  
conditions in Tulare County**

...will we continue  
to “drive on the  
right streets so we  
don’t have  
to look at it.” ?



As a region, the Valley  
can successfully support:

-A healthy economy

-Important natural resources

-Livable communities

-Productive agriculture

***But there are no easy  
answers***

[www.greatvalley.org](http://www.greatvalley.org)